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ABSTRACT

This book describes the benefits of learning for carers (people who look after a relative or friend who needs a significant amount of care) and offers case studies of good practice in the organizations that have developed learning for carers by working across agencies in Great Britain. It is intended for staff and managers in such agencies and organizations as further education colleges, adult education services, social services departments, health authorities and trusts, voluntary organizations, and carers' centers and groups. Chapter 1 discusses why learning for carers matters, the sort of organizations that should be involved in learning for carers, and the support carers need to access learning. Chapter 2, on carers as learners, describes learning activities in which carers have been involved, reasons carers give for returning to learning, what carers have gained from learning, distance learning, barriers to learning for carers, how colleges and adult education could do more to support carers, and how to encourage carers to access learning. Chapters 3 and 4 look at the main examples of educational provision for carers. Key points for practice are drawn from each example. Chapters 1-4 conclude with summaries and checklists. Chapter 5 offers an action planning checklist of themes, questions, and ideas to help plan educational provision across agencies. Appendixes include biographies of the 1998 and 1999 National Lottery Charities Board Carers' Awards Winners and addresses of seven useful organizations. (YLB)

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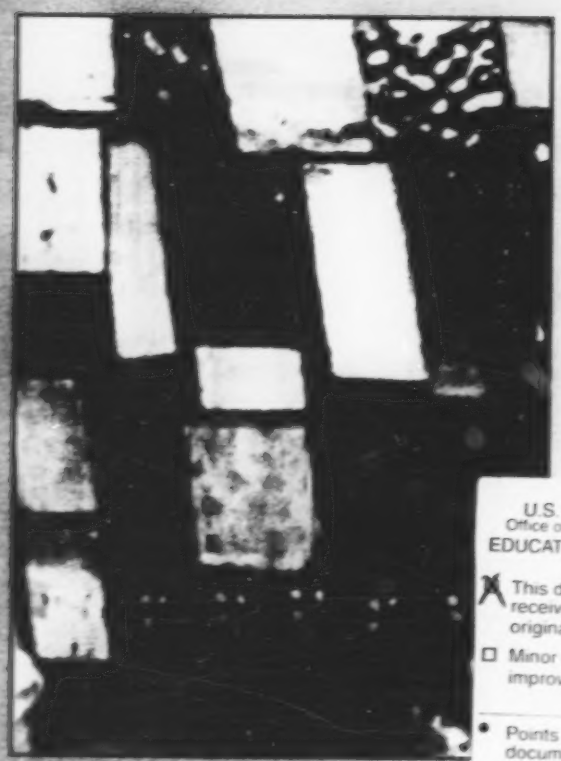

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Developing education for carers across agencies

Jeannie Sutcliffe

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THE NATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR ADULT LEARNING

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ACCESS AND INCLUSION

Developing Education for Carers Across Agencies

Jeannie Sutcliffe

NIACE
THE NATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR ADULT LEARNING

NATIONAL LOTTERY CHARITIES BOARD

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NIACE
THE NATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR ADULT LEARNING

NIACE, the national organisation for adult learning, has a broad remit to promote lifelong learning opportunities for adults. NIACE works to develop increased participation in education and training, particularly for those who do not have easy access because of barriers of class, gender, age, race, language and culture, learning difficulties and disabilities, or insufficient financial resources.

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All photographs taken at Lancashire College by Paula Keenan.

Foreword

I am delighted to have this opportunity to add my support to the messages contained within this valuable document. It provides a much-needed guide in an underdeveloped area of work with carers. The evidence within this report confirms what we set out in The National Strategy for Carers. We know that carers need practical help in many areas. We want them to be better informed, better supported and better cared for. This is part of the Government's wider objectives for health, equality and social inclusion of carers.

When we talk of supporting carers this includes enabling them to have time for themselves. We know, and this report acknowledges, that many carers, young and old, want to take advantage of educational opportunities. Some may want to do this for fun, others for mental stimulation, others to improve their employment opportunities and a host of other reasons – again, as this report makes very clear.

One way that the Government is supporting carers in this area is by increasing the funds available for short-term breaks. Over three years the Carers Grant will total £140 million in England. This report draws attention to the need for such breaks, and the funding of them, to enable carers to take up learning opportunities. This is as true for carers following long-distance learning courses at home as it is for those who leave the home to attend classes. Local Authorities are required to use this grant to develop new and flexible breaks services. The potential is there for carers to use such breaks to participate in education and training.

This report outlines the difficulties that carers have in availing themselves of such opportunities and should act as a posi-

tive stimulus for local agencies to work in partnership to overcome these. Perhaps more importantly it highlights places where there has been excellent progress and real innovation in helping carers in this area. There are also helpful checklists to help local agencies and carers themselves to evaluate local services and what is necessary to improve these. This Government intends to ensure quality services for all – irrespective of where you live. All local agencies must aspire to the best practice in the field and there are good examples here for others to follow. In addressing educational and training opportunities it is just as important as in other fields that all local agencies work in partnership. This is not just an issue for educational institutions but for health, social services, transport, amongst others.

I warmly commend this report to a wide readership. There are messages here for managers and staff, planners and local councillors and, not least, carers themselves. I would also like to thank the individual carers themselves for sharing their stories with us and reminding us not to make assumptions about the aspirations and abilities of individuals.

John Hutton MP
Minister of State for Health

Preface

Who is this book for?

This book has been written for staff and managers in different agencies and organisations, such as:

- Further education colleges
- Adult education services
- Social services departments
- Health authorities and trusts
- Voluntary organisations
- Carers' centres and groups

Who do we mean when we say 'carers'?

By carers, we are describing the people who look after a relative or friend who needs a significant amount of care. Family members are caring for people who are disabled, elderly, have learning difficulties or mental health difficulties, or who have chronic illnesses. One in eight of us are carers. This book focuses on the needs of adults who are carers and who are unwaged for their caring reponsibilities. They may be caring for an adult or for a child. There are also many young carers of school age who have their learning disrupted by their caring responsibilities. While the focus of this book is on adults in general, people reading it may also want to reflect on how continuing education can provide access for carers who want to return to learning as young adults, having missed out on their school education.

What is the purpose of the book?

The purpose of this book is to raise awareness of the educational needs of carers. Education for carers is under-developed nationally. Both direct provision and support for carers to access learning are limited. The aim of this book is to highlight the pockets of good practice which do exist and to offer practical ideas to people across agencies in order to develop education for carers. The voice of learners who are carers is a strong feature of the book, as they articulate the importance of learning in their lives. Learners' stories are told as a powerful way of raising awareness of the issues. This book offers checklists and summaries to help readers find their way around the text easily. The final chapter offers an action planning checklist to help plan developments.

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Introduction

'Training can empower carers – by giving them new confidence, allowing them to make new contacts and equipping them with skills which will enrich their lives…'

Caring about Carers – A National Strategy for Carers, 1999

'I can keep on learning because of the encouragement I received and it meant a lot to be recognised for being a carer. I believe that most of the time we are the forgotten people.'

Pauline Wrench, NIACE/NLCB Carers' Award Winner, 1998

There are nearly six million carers in Britain. About one in eight people have caring responsibilities. The Government publication *Caring about Carers – A National Strategy for Carers* (1999) describes how services should change to be responsive to the needs of carers. In the foreword of the report, Tony Blair describes carers as 'among the unsung heroes of British life'. The report encourages agencies to work together in partnership, to include social services, health, education and voluntary organisations. It is clear that continuing education has a potentially very important role to play. The report cites positive examples of carers being able to go to evening classes, to gain skills for employment if wished and having the chance to go on a residential course away from the pressures of caring. However, recent research and development work by the National Institute of Adult Continuing

Education (NIACE) into education for carers has shown that these sorts of opportunities are as yet few and far between. The purpose of this book is to describe the benefits of learning for carers and to outline examples of practice, in the hope that people across agencies will be inspired to develop educational opportunities for carers in their own areas. There are pockets of good practice but on a national level these are rare: there is a huge need for developments to be planned in partner-ship across organisations and in consultation with carers. Chapters 3 and 4 look at specific examples of practice which the NIACE research found, and offer case studies of different models.

Why does learning for carers matter?

Access to learning for carers has many practical benefits. It gives people a break from caring. It offers the chance to step out of role and to be seen as an individual rather than as 'Kevin's mum', as one carer put it to us. She is 65 and is studying a computer course. She said: 'You have to look after yourself so that you can care for others. You need to become a person again and not just a mum... what I felt I needed was some independence: I got out and proved I could do something.' Education gives carers the chance to learn new skills. The NIACE research has shown that carers, like other adult learners, learn for a wide variety of purposes, such as to:

- go to classes for pleasure and self-development
- develop skills relevant to caring where appropriate, such as stress management or safe lifting
- work towards academic qualifications
- gain work related skills
- improve basic skills
- regain confidence.

Learning can help carers to stay physically healthy through learning things like safe lifting techniques. Having a break to

learn new things like stress management or to learn something pleasurable can also help to retain mental health and well-being. In one area, the local health trusts invest in education for carers as they recognise that the benefits are long-term and that this will probably save the health budget money in the longer term.

The stories of several learners are described in the next chapter, together with details of the barriers which they have faced to access learning.

What sort of organisations need to be involved in learning for carers?

Local partnerships will vary from area to area. However, there is clear scope for building active partnerships to promote life-long learning for carers, which could include alliances of:

- further education colleges
- local education authorities
- social services departments
- health authorities and trusts
- carers' organisations and centres
- voluntary organisations
- residential colleges
- higher education institutions
- Training and Enterprise Councils (due to be disbanded in 2001, when Learning and Skills Councils will be set up in England).

In England, Lifelong Learning Partnerships have been established to plan for local learning. As from 2001, all funding for post-school learning will be channelled through the proposed local Learning and Skills Councils, as outlined in the Learning and Skills Bill, which is going through Parliament at the time of writing. The Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) will incorporate existing funding for further education colleges, LEA adult education and Training and Enterprise Councils. In

Wales, the National Council for Education and Training for Wales will be set up, which will have links with the National Assembly.

What support do carers need to access learning?

Carers need a flexible menu of strategies to support them. Providers need to consider the following issues, which may all be relevant:

- respite care for the person the carer would normally be looking after
- education guidance and taster sessions so that carers can make an informed choice about their learning
- a reasonable choice of learning opportunities at different levels should be offered. People may not want to be typecast as learning only about caring-related subjects and may want to study for intellectual stimulation.
- financial support for course fees and materials
- help with transport
- flexible provision to fit in with caring responsibilities.

Full time carers are one of several groups listed in a recent circular from the Further Education Funding Council (99/42[1]) with details of target groups for widening participation in further education colleges. This recognition of carers as an underrepresented group will offer some scope for developments. The types of support which carers need is considered in more detail in subsequent chapters.

The Carers and Disabled Children Bill

At the time of writing, the Carers and Disabled Children Bill is going through Parliament. The intention of the Bill is to

1 Circular 99/42 was issued by FEFC on 5 November 1999

enable local authorities to offer carers support, to include offering 'new support to carers to help them to maintain their own health and well being.'[2] Local authorities will be able to make direct payments to carers based on assessed needs, rather than the money going straight into services. Voucher schemes will be available to make respite care more flexible. Services to carers are not defined in the Bill, but, importantly, the explanatory notes mention 'training' as a form of support. It will be essential to explore how the direct payments proposed in the Carers and Disabled Children Bill (such as vouchers for respite care or the proposed direct payments to carers to meet their own assessed needs) can support participation by carers in learning.

2 As quoted in the Explanatory Notes

Summary

One in eight people are carers in Britain.

The Government strategy paper *Caring about Carers* places emphasis on agencies working together to meet the needs of carers. The role of education is acknowledged.

NIACE research has shown that education for carers is patchy and under-developed.

Carers learn for a wide variety of purposes, not always related to their caring responsibilities.

The support needs of carers, such as respite care for the person they would normally care for, need to be a part of educational packages, which should be flexible.

The Carers and Disabled Children Bill may offer new possibilities for those who care for disabled children to access learning, if interpreted imaginatively.

Making it happen – a checklist of key questions

- Have you seen and read *Caring about Carers – a National Strategy for Carers*?
- Do you know of any schemes in your area which offer education for carers?
- Which agencies and organisations could you work in partnership with to develop opportunities for carers to access learning?
- Are carers' organisations represented in lifelong learning partnerships in your area?
- How can carers' interests be represented on the forthcoming Learning and Skills Councils?
- How can the direct payments proposed in the Carers and Disabled Children Bill (such as vouchers for respite care or the proposed direct payments to carers to meet their own assessed needs) support participation by carers in learning for a range of purposes?

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Caring about Carers – A National Strategy for Carers
(1999, S1. National Strategy Carers Project)

Available from:
DoH Distribution Centre
PO Box 410
Wetherby
LS23 7LN

The report can also be downloaded from the Internet at:
http://www.doh.gov.uk/carers.htm

Carers and Disabled Children Bill 2000
(January 2000, The Stationery Office)

Learning and Skills Bill
(December 1999, The Stationery Office)

The Learning and Skills Council Prospectus: Learning to Succeed
(1999, DfEE)

Available from: DfEE Publications
P.O. Box 5050
Sherwood Park
Annesley
Nottingham
NG15 0DJ
0845 60 222 60

See also the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) web site for updates on the Learning and Skills legislation:
http://www.niace.org.uk

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Focus on carers as learners

'I want to learn so I will be identified as a person who "can" and not just "that woman with the handicapped son".'

Patricia Allouis, NIACE/NLCB Carers Award Winner, 1998

NIACE staff recognised that carers had little free time or resources to access learning. They were aware from personal experience of the positive impact that learning could have on carers' lives, and of the great difficulty carers face in arranging respite care to go out. Since 1998, NIACE has been able to offer annual awards for carers who want to learn, with backing from the National Lottery Charities Board and, for 2000, from the Nationwide Building Society. The aim of the awards is to highlight the issues which face carers in trying to access learning and also to celebrate carers' achievements and aspirations. The following examples are drawn mostly from award winners in 1998 and 1999. Profiles of the award winners can be found in the appendix to this book. They give vivid pen portraits of people's individual interests and of their caring responsibilities. The winners were aged between 29 and 69. Of the 27 winners, 24 were women and three were men. Up to 14 awards have been made each year on a regional basis. These have consisted of £500: half to spend on learning and half to spend on buying-in respite care. The awards are tied into Adult Learners' Week, which is an annual celebration of adult learning held every May and co-ordinated by NIACE. Carers are nominated for the

awards by people who think they would benefit from a chance to learn. The importance of being recognised by winning an award was described by Gurmit Jandu, an award winner in 1999: 'Winning the award had given me confidence and makes me feel I am not useless but useful. It also made my child proud of his mother. Being a single parent who had won something. "Way to go!" he said. That made me feel good as well.' Carers who are able to access learning are still in the minority. These carers who won awards are the few and not the many, but their stories present powerful messages about the varied learning aspirations of carers and the barriers which they face.

What are carers learning?

The carers who have been able to access learning are engaging in all sorts of learning activities. Here are just a few of the subjects which winners of the Carers Awards have told NIACE they are studying:

- Diploma in Counselling
- feng shui
- horse whispering
- traditional fiddle lessons
- computer skills
- basic skills
- English for Speakers of Other Languages
- part-time degree in sociology/social policy
- postgraduate study in adult education
- MA in Victorian Popular Culture.

What reasons do carers have for returning to learning?

Carers told us that they had a variety of reasons for wanting to learn.

'Getting off benefits and into real work.'

'Self-development.'

'My real potential had never been realised.'

'Therapy for the mind.'

'I go mad in the house on my own: I really enjoy going to college.'

'It helps me get out of the house in the winter so I don't get too depressed... I enjoy it and it's a step in the right direction.'

'I wanted to do the courses because I want to better myself and hopefully in time do a degree and be able to provide my family with a better quality of life and financial security. I also wanted to prove to myself that I was a somebody and not a nobody.'

'I am very keen to return to learning to improve my chances of securing employment, to give myself another interest and the chance to enjoy myself.'

Confidence is often mentioned as a reason for wanting to learn. As one carer put it: 'Hopefully the learning experience will help me to focus on issues other than those of my role as a carer, meet other people from different backgrounds, also restore my confidence and sense of self-worth.'

' I want to develop an interest outside of the house so my mind would be fresher and more alert when I am at home.'

What have carers gained from learning?

For carers, confidence and a sense of achievement are high among the benefits of learning, as the following quotes from award winners reveal:

'I feel that I have gained self-confidence within myself, a qualification and the knowledge of knowing that I can do more if I want to, and be successful at it.'

'I feel refreshed and renewed, and I am sure therefore a better parent...'

'I feel more confident now that I am developing in a personal way.'

'I am really enjoying learning again and feel that I am actually achieving and doing something worthwhile with my life.'

'Much satisfaction, a lot of new knowledge and an addiction to learning.'

Some carers were learning with a view to employment (see also Chapter 4 on this topic). One carer studied for a graduate diploma in counselling. She wrote: 'The NIACE Award was important to me both in terms of helping financially, but, much more important, it recognised the particular difficulties which a carer has in restarting the rest of her life. It has enabled me to return to work after a 15-year gap in paid employment, and opened up the prospect of satisfying and interesting professional work...I hope to continue as a lifelong learner and can now also view myself as a very valued, committed and competent carer, with a life!'

Distance learning

Distance learning has proved helpful for a number of carers. As one carer told us: 'I found it very difficult to find classes that would suit my needs and in the end distance learning was the only option...I found out about distance learning courses via the Internet and at my former college.' She has studied GCSE English and Law with the National Extension College (NEC). This carer has now signed up to do A-level English via distance learning at a college in the North West. However, there were difficulties on the way as her local college had discontinued this mode of delivery: 'I spoke with the Principal of the college as I believed he was not carer-aware and informed him that no other courses were suitable to my needs. The Principal

explained that it was due to "costs"...' Happily the NEC was able to refer her to another college which did offer English A-level by distance learning.

One carer told us how his learning had been funded by a bursary from the National Extension College (NEC) for distance learning. He said he particularly valued 'being able to study at your own pace and when there is free time'. NEC offered a very successful bursary scheme for carers and disabled people funded by the National Lottery Charities Board, which ended in April 2000.

Another carer lives in a very remote rural area. His daughter requires 24-hour care and is too fragile to attend school. He plans to do a distance learning MA in Humanities, with a long-term view to working from home. He told us: 'I have not been able to go out to work for the last 12 years.'

However, distance learning will not suit everybody. One carer had a word of caution and told us: 'Distance learning does solve time, transport, respite, etc...but the carer is trapped in the caring environment.'

What are the barriers to learning for carers?

Many carers are on low incomes and have little or no free time. Paying course fees, arranging respite care and organising transport can all present great difficulties. One person told us: 'Money is always the problem...if you haven't got the money, all the help in care in the world doesn't help.' The need for high quality respite care was clearly put by one carer: 'Only if there is someone to step into a carer's shoes can a carer be free to live a 'normal' life for a few hours.' Another carer told us that in her area, social services seemed not to value learning: 'Getting support from Social Services has been a battleground.' The timing of classes to fit in with caring commitments, the need to attend regularly and to hand work and assignments in promptly can all present difficulties for people with major caring responsibilities. For these people, flexibility is essential.

There can also be issues for the person being cared for, if he/she is having to get used to an unfamiliar person providing respite care. A long time spent caring can also make people feel isolated and undermined: as one carer put it to us: 'People say to me, you should have your own life, but because I've been stuck in the house for so long, I'm not used to going out.' There is also the feeling of guilt experienced by some: 'I was feeling uncertain and guilty about spending time away from my caring duties... I persevered and am now very glad that I did.'

How could colleges and adult education do more to support carers?

One carer had clear ideas about what would be helpful:

'They could provide carers with the option of distance learning. Set aside books to borrow for carers, when requested, as carers find it difficult to get into college to borrow books. They should have a trained member of staff who knows about carers, so that carers' needs are understood and not pushed to one side. They should also not be pushy...when I was at my former college, I was harassed about my assignments... I did not need this kind of stress.'

How can carers be encouraged to access learning?

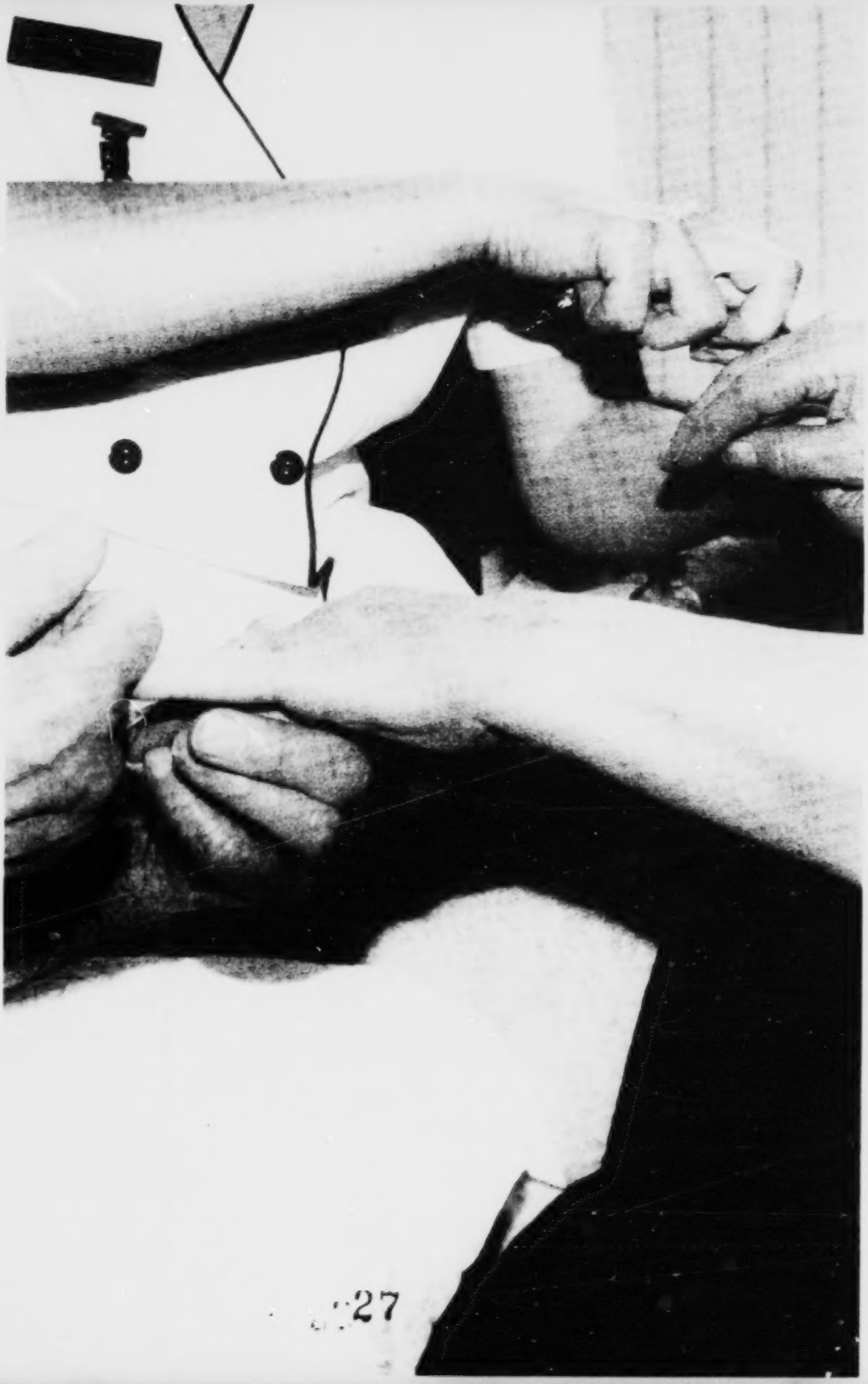
The same carer continued to say: 'College and Adult Education centres need to provide all types of learning. They need to advertise more, and carers' support groups need to encourage carers to return to education, to have an outside life. The Government should support this and give every carer, no matter what their income, free education, so that they too can have an interest of their own, something that they can feel proud of.'

Summary

Not many carers have the chance to access learning, so the carers quoted in this section are in a minority. Most of them had won NIACE/NLCB Carers' Awards for learning. They were learning everything from feng shui for fun to counselling for vocational reasons. Regaining confidence through learning was a primary reason for many carers to gain access to education. Practical barriers included poor access to transport, little respite care and lack of finance. The option of distance learning, better training of education staff about the issues carers face, the involvement by carers' groups in education and a stress-free environment to learn in were all seen as important.

Making it happen – a checklist of key questions

- How can carers be supported to access the full range of learning opportunities available?
- What practical support can be offered to carers in your area to overcome the sorts of barriers described, such as finance, respite care and transport?
- How can carers in your area be advocates for learning to encourage other carers to have a go at learning?



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Focus on practice

This chapter and the following one both look at the main examples of educational provision for carers. These initiatives are still rare in terms of national coverage. Large areas of the country have nothing developed, as far as the researchers are aware. All of the schemes described in this chapter have evolved quite differently and have various partnerships underpinning them. Inter-agency planning and collaboration are central to all of them. Key points for practice are drawn out from each example. The theme of access to training for employment is dealt with separately in Chapter 4.

Short courses for carers run by Bolton Community Education

Bolton Community Education has run several six-week courses for carers called 'Coping with Caring', in collaboration with the Bolton Carers Support Project. Sessions have been offered on the following topics:

- first aid
- relaxation
- aromatherapy
- introduction to lifting and moving people
- coping with feelings

- assertiveness skills.

The development worker commented: 'Initially people are very anxious about coming out. The course builds up people's confidence.'

Learning to relax

In one session on relaxation involving aromatherapy, carers talked about how difficult it is to relax because of their responsibilities. One person said she never had time to relax. Another said that on the rare occasions she did have time to herself, she did not know what to do with herself as she was not used to having free time. One person described how the stress of caring for her father had caused a period of depression and exhaustion: 'I was breaking down in the street.' A friend persuaded her to try line dancing. At first she was exhausted but joined in and to her delight found that she was energised by the dancing. She now goes regularly and the time she spends learning how to dance is the only time she can forget about her father and his constant need for support.

Key points for practice

The 'Coping with Caring' courses have been free of charge to make it as easy as possible for carers to attend. Many carers are on low incomes or are unwaged because of their caring responsibilities. The Bolton Carers Support Project arranged and paid for sitters and transport so that respite care and getting to classes did not present obstacles for the carers who might want to take part. Carers were positive in their feedback about the courses, as the following quotes demonstrate:

'Very interesting topics. Very enjoyable for me. Helpful to meet with other carers and chat and relax and learn at the same time.'

'I discovered that I am not alone – caring makes you feel very isolated.'

'The course was a 'pick me up' – it made me feel part of the world again.'

Funding for the courses has come from a variety of sources, including the Guardian Manchester Trust, Sainsbury's Community Grants and some small grants from the Local Education Authority. Plans for longer term funding are being developed, as are plans for a more advanced course, for which carers who have been on previous courses will have a say in planning.

Progression from the courses

At the end of each course, carers are offered a contact name in case they want to continue learning, plus a leaflet on education guidance. Informal support networks have developed as carers have swapped addresses and useful contact details for taxi schemes, disability groups and helpful organisations.

Reaching carers in a rural area

The Carers' Resource, which is a charity in Harrogate, has made arrangements to access the Key Club scheme at Harrogate College. This scheme enables registered organisations to enrol on designated Key Club courses at a reduced fee. This is currently half of the usual course cost. Information about learning opportunities are circulated in the Carers' Resource newsletter *Choices*, which is circulated to about 1,400 carers in the local area. Forty four people have had letters of introduction with a view to taking up the Key Club scheme. A wide range of courses has been studied by carers as a consequence of the scheme, including computer courses, business courses,

GCSEs and counselling. Carers have also studied a course called 'Fresh Start', which offers a mix of biology, IT, chemistry and maths. Feedback has been very positive and the affordability of the reduced price courses was cited as a major incentive, as carers could not otherwise have taken part. Maggie Matthews, the Information Officer at the Carers' Resource says: 'For some it was therapeutic and an opportunity for social interaction, for others the start of thinking about going back to work and upgrading skills.'

North Yorkshire is a rural area and transport difficulties pose a major barrier for carers. Another worry is obtaining 'suitable, regular respite care'. The difficulty of paying for courses is a 'perennial problem'. The Carers' Resource joined the Princess Royal Trust for Carers in 1998 and hence now have access to apply to the Trust's Educational Bursary Fund. Maggie says: 'A number of our carers have been successful in gaining awards to help them fund a variety of courses.' Applications for bursaries have included people wanting to do courses in alternative therapies, Royal Horticultural Society qualifications and Open University courses. Maggie says: 'Most carers cited improving their job prospects as the main reason for taking the course.'

Comments from carers

'Thoroughly enjoyed it. Intend to do computer skills next. Great to have low-cost fee.'

'I am going onto the next stage in counselling which will run for one year. I would not have joined the course without being a member of the Key Club. Thank you!'

'Fulfilled a long-held ambition – something just for me.'

'My main reason for taking part was therapeutic, i.e. a break from caring and to have some social interaction, also to discover about science…The Key Club is a wonderful idea and I have

gained a lot from it and have now begun the Access course – biology, chemistry, maths and IT.'

Key points for practice

- Carers can receive tuition at concessionary rates at Harrogate College.
- They can also apply for bursaries for learning from the Princess Royal Trust for Carers.
- Transport is a difficulty for carers in general but poses a particular problem in a rural area. In North Yorkshire, only the towns are well served by public transport.
- Information about learning opportunities is well disseminated by the Carers' Resource newsletter.

Lancashire Adult Education Carers' Project

Lancashire College runs the Lancashire Adult Education Carers' Project. Andy Burgen, the Principal, describes the focus of the work as being on the 'personal and social development of carers'. The project is currently funded by joint finance money from two local health authorities and the Local Education Authority. There are four part-time development workers in post. Andy Burgen points out that it is important in terms of strategy for the needs of carers to be addressed and embedded in the plans of the new Learning and Skills Councils. Partnership working and networking have underpinned the work from the outset. There are close links with carers' groups and the education and training aspect of the work crosses the boundaries of health, social services and education. The funding is not tied to prescribed outputs, which gives space for flexibility. The project's agenda overlaps with that of key organisations who are involved. It has found carers previously unknown to Social Services carers' support workers and put them in touch. Social Services have also seen the

courses as an imaginative use of respite care time for carers. The health authorities recognise that carers' involvement with the courses increases their levels of mental and physical well-being, which leads to likely long-term benefits for the health of both the carers and the people whom they care for. Voluntary organisations have gained an appreciation of the value of education for carers, and have also developed skills in organising community-based education.

The project has run a number of 24-hour mini-breaks for carers at the residential college, called 'Taking Care of the Carer: a Recharge for Mind and Body.' Local carers' organisations help to determine the curriculum. At first, carers asked for subjects related to caring. Later on they started asking for a wider choice of subjects. Courses to date have included line dancing, wine tasting, reflexology, mosaics, assertiveness training and container gardening. The course gives carers a break from the caring situation. People say that they feel recharged and able to face life again. Although the courses only offer a taste of different subjects, carers have taken away new enthusiasms and interests to follow up once they are home again. For example, one carer went on to develop a keen interest in local history after a short course. The first residential recharge event was free for carers: others have been costed at a nominal £10. Social Services have helped out with respite care. A current course of 'Time Out' sessions offers free tuition for carers in dances from around the world to include Spain, Greece, India and Egypt, linked to presentations such as 'Hidden Spain' or 'Dancing through the Ages'. The project tries to help with lifts if transport is a difficulty and also liaises with local carers' groups to help overcome any transport difficulties.

Free outreach provision has also been developed throughout Lancashire and is very flexible. The content and venue are chosen by carers, who receive a course tailor-made to suit their needs. Subjects offered have included confidence through drama, computing, English for Speakers of Other Languages, yoga and 'Look After Yourself'. There have been several

'Pamper days' run in different areas of Lancashire. All of these are free.

A carer's perspective

One carer looked after her terminally ill husband until he died, and currently cares for a brother with schizophrenia. She wrote to say how much she valued learning and said: 'Through "Making Space" I discovered the carers' courses at Chorley College and have found these so beneficial. The short breaks help me to cope much better at home. The educational content provides stimulus and absorption to take your mind off any personal problems. It has enriched my life.'

This carer had first started to go to art evening classes when her husband was ill. 'It was literally my life saver. I started the class with hesitant, tiny drawings and ended with confident, bold statements that I would not have thought myself capable of at the start.'

Other outcomes of the Lancashire Project

The Lancashire Adult Education Carers' Project has also achieved a number of other significant outcomes, to include:

- recently securing funding from the Carers' Strategy Fund
- commissioning research which found that of 500 societies and organisations supporting carers in Lancashire, 'only one society offered any form of self-care though education'
- rural carers' events in collaboration with the Community Council for Lancashire
- hosting the making of a video about carers in collaboration with Lancashire Social Services, the University of Central Lancashire and two health authorities: North West Lancashire and East Lancashire
- running a national conference on 'Including carers' in 1999, with a keynote speech by Professor Bob Fryer.

Key points for practice

The project was the only adult education scheme cited as an example in the Government's *Caring about Carers* strategy paper (1999). The project has thrived for a number of reasons. Carers are actively involved in planning learning. Links with key organisations such as health, social services, and further education colleges are well developed and a bid for joint finance for three years until 2001 was successful. Course fees are low or provision is free. Participation in learning is not tied to outcomes, which means that provision can be flexible and develop with a carer-led agenda. The provision is carer-driven and owned.

Collaboration between the Workers' Educational Association and Care for the Carers in Bexhill, East Sussex

'Care for the Carers' is a charity supporting carers in East Sussex. A grant from the Lankelly Foundation has enabled joint work to be developed with the local branch of the Workers' Educational Association (WEA). The work is being monitored by the Centre for Continuing Education at Sussex University. Sandy Lazarus, the Care for the Carers development worker, describes the issues which had to be confronted in designing the provision to cater for those carers who wanted 'an outside, absorbing interest':

'Mainstream adult education seemed an ideal answer but courses are often too long for carers to commit themselves, as their unpredictable lives do not fit traditional educational timetables. Help with feeding, washing and dressing also means attending anything before 10.30am is difficult for carers. Caring is expensive and any spare money is spent on extra heating or caring aids. Some of those cared for cannot be left for long and good quality relief care is too expensive, as is suitable available transport to the provision.'

The WEA were able to tailor courses specifically to meet these needs. They devised courses which were no longer than five weeks long, with sessions no longer than two hours' duration, which took place between 10.30am and 3.30pm. The curriculum was offered in three broad categories: physical, to include Alexander technique and Shiatsu; liberal, to include local history and ancient civilizations; and creative, to include writing and art. Carers could attend more than one course. By July 1999, 65 carers had enrolled on courses out of a total of 250 carers known to Care for Carers in Bexhill. The WEA tutors were carefully selected. They were conscious of the fatigue, time pressures and stress which can affect carers. Carers were asked their views. Susan McGrath, the Centre for Continuing Education researcher found that: 'Whatever the subject, the reasons most often cited for satisfaction are that "this is something for me"; "it helps me switch off/relax"; and "it's good to be with others who know what [caring is] like and I don't have to explain if I'm late."'

The project has a steering group and the research phase will extend until June 2001. One issue is that people who could access mainstream provision do not appear to be taking up the option, which merits further exploration in order to give feedback to local providers.

Key points for practice

The project is built on a three-way partnership between a carers' group, the WEA and a university. The timing of courses was carefully considered to fit in with the needs of carers. The curriculum is wide-ranging and extends beyond a focus on caring-related courses by offering physical, liberal and creative options. The work is being monitored as it unfolds, by a university researcher.

The above project is also described in an article for the NIACE journal *Adults Learning* (November 1999 issue) called 'Care for the Carers' by Sandy Lazarus, David Alfred and Susan McGrath.

Partners in Policy Making

Partners in Policy Making is a leadership programme for parents of disabled children under 12 and for disabled adults, including people with learning difficulties or mental health difficulties. The focus is on empowerment through leadership. The course aims to 'develop community leaders who will work to build a fairer and more just society for all'. It gives information about national and local policies in relation to disabled people and their families. Encouraging parents of disabled children and disabled people to influence public policy is one of the aims. The course runs for two days a month over nine months and is free. It is based on a successful American model developed by the Minnesota Developmental Disability Council and has been brought to the UK by Circles Network, a registered charity.

Further details from:
Circles Network
Pamwell House
160 Pennywell Road
Upper Easton
Bristol BS5 0TX
0117 939 3917

A pilot course for carers in Northern Ireland

'I felt the course was something every carer should have.'

'I gained a lot of knowledge, confidence and understanding.'

In Derry, a ten-week course called 'Time for You' for parents and carers of people with disabilities was run in late 1999. The organisers had been in contact with NIACE and with Lancashire College to get ideas and informal support during the planning stage. Health, social services, the Family Information Group and Mencap all worked in partnership, with two people

taking the lead. A venue with a creche was found and money was allocated to support travel costs, refreshments, guest speakers, and so on. A grant was given from the European Peace and Reconciliation Funds to help with expenses. The course involved relaxation, creative drama work to address the role of professionals, assertiveness and inputs on accessing health, social services and voluntary groups. At the start, parents voiced powerfully the need to talk about diagnosis and disclosure in relation to disability. At their request, a counsellor came in to explore these issues with them. The parents decided to go ahead and set up their own group at the end of the short course. As the course co-ordinators said: 'No matter which direction they choose to go in, they are going to be a very powerful group for positive change.'

A course for black carers in Birmingham

The Handsworth and Lozells Methodist Training Initiative was given a grant from the Adult and Community Learning Fund.[3] This project in Birmingham aimed to give black carers tutoring and learning support skills so that they could develop individualised learning for their dependants as well as gaining skills for paid employment. Local research had shown a higher than average incidence of home-based care within the black community. The project bid pointed out that 'within the vicinity of Handsworth and Lozells, there may be as may as 1,200 carers and their dependants who are currently denied the opportunity to participate in formalised learning.' The project aimed to work with 30 people over a 12 month period. Respite care, key skills development and peer group support were all built into the process. The voluntary sector, Handsworth College and the University of Central England were all involved in the developments.

3 This fund is currently administered by NIACE on behalf of the Department for Education and Employment in England.

Northamptonshire Adult Education

Uplands Adult Education in Northamptonshire has worked with eight carers to develop their skills in outreach work and training techniques. The plan is for carers to then deliver training in personal development and job seeking skills to groups of carers in rural communities. The project was set up in response to a need identified by members of a local carers' association. The project, due for completion in June 2000. was supported by matched funding from the Local Education Authority and from the European Social Fund.

Summary

Although little provision currently exists nationally to help carers access learning, there are several good examples to draw on, such as the short courses, residential courses and access to college courses described in this chapter. All of the examples given are based on partnerships and build on a cross-agency model of working. Short courses specifically for carers can help people to regain confidence, to learn to relax and to develop skills relevant to caring, such as safe lifting. However, carers are also learning a wide range of subjects, from Shiatsu to business studies. Carers are helped to access provision by having reduced fees, help with transport and respite care as needed. Carers need to be actively involved and consulted with about the timing, content and location of provision. Only one example was found of provision targeting black carers for education.

Making it happen – a checklist of key questions

- How can access to education for carers be developed in your area?

- What sources of funding are available to develop education for carers?
- How can joint planning across agencies and joint finance be developed to cater for the learning needs of carers?
- How can short courses for carers be subsidised in your area?
- How can bursaries for learning be made available for carers?
- What organisations could work together to offer transport and respite care?

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Access to training and employment opportunities for carers

'When we are home looking after someone, we do lose touch with the changes that are going on in the work force...'

Gurmit Kaur Jandu,
NIACE/NLCB Carers' Award Winner, 1999

Access to training and skills development is a key issue for carers who wish to look for paid work or to return to employment after time spent caring. The vast majority of carers, 70%, are of working age. The peak age for caring is 45 to 64 years of age. Virtually one in four (24%) of all adults in this age group are carers.[4] Nearly half (49%) of a sample of carers surveyed in 1996[5] had been forced to give up work to undertake their caring role. Sixty-two per cent of carers were then out of work or could not take up training opportunities for up to ten years or more. Offering carers opportunities to regain lost confidence, to receive guidance and counselling about possible options and to review and update their skills are crucial aspects of the work undertaken by the two projects described below.

4 Statistics from the 1990 General Household Survey

5 *The True Cost of Caring – a survey of carers' lost income*, Caring Costs Alliance

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Linked projects in Devon and Surrey

Action for Carers and Employment (ACE) in Surrey and Caring Options for Training and Work in Devon are related projects in an international partnership with a focus on employment. Both projects receive European Social Fund money and have matched funding from local authorities: Surrey Social Services and Devon County Council respectively. They are linked into the Integra programme, which comes under the remit of the Government's Social Exclusion Unit. Both projects will be evaluated by the Carers National Association and by Plymouth University. The projects aim to support carers who want to explore training and employment opportunities, whether paid or voluntary. ACE devised a questionnaire survey with Surrey TEC to ask carers about their training and employment needs. There were 750 respondents. Thirty-three per cent of the respondents felt that they did not have the confidence to go back into training for work. Thirty-eight per cent felt that they would need training in IT to go back to work. The ACE and Options projects have set up a number of local carer-specific training courses. They aim to give carers a safe and supportive environment where they can discuss training and employment and share their experiences, aspirations and anxieties. Courses are run both 'stand alone' and within local carers' groups, and cover confidence building, assertiveness, welfare benefits, stress management and job seeking skills.

Both projects offer respite care and transport costs to enable carers to attend. Individual guidance and counselling is an important part of the overall work of the project. A needs assessment is done on an individual basis in carers' homes, and uses a self-assessment programme run on a laptop computer. The counselling identifies skills and interests, highlights relevant training courses and offers the chance to brush up on job search skills. Flexibility is essential. Former Surrey project co-ordinator Madeleine Starr says: 'Carers need time to think about what they want to do and whether they can take it on. We aim to support people to the point at which they are ready to make choices about opportunities.' Madeleine is currently managing the Carers National Association's (CNA) work on carers and employment.

Developing carer awareness

Carer awareness is an important part of the project's work. A course called 'Voice of the Carer' is delivered to health and social services staff. It is presented by a team of two: a professional trainer and a carer who is also a trainer. The careers and employment services and employers have also been targeted. A video and training pack have been produced for employers by ACE, marketed and delivered nationally by CNA. ACE staff say: 'We hope to make employers more carer aware.' The Devon 'Caring Options' scheme is also producing a pack to highlight carers' needs within services for training providers support/guidance organisations, such as the Employment Service.

Links with adult and further education

ACE is currently exploring the possibility of moving its carers' courses into the Community Education Service. Courses are now advertised in community education brochures, and in some cases are run in community education centres. If successful, adult education providers could themselves apply for ESF money to support them, and therefore 'put carers in mainstream services.' ACE has lobbied with adult and further education for concessions for carers and carer-specific courses. FE and AE routinely give 50% concession on fees, which is the level of remission for people on benefits. Sometimes, a referral through ACE has led to the course fee being waived.

In Devon, Caring Options for Training and Work expected respite care needs to be a major barrier to participation in education and training. In fact, they have found through talking to carers that the cost of course fees and learning materials is one of the biggest barriers. In Devon, the project is part of a wider group exploring the possibility of a consortium bid (with the county's colleges and the local authority) to develop provision for carers from funding linked to the Government's *Caring for Carers* strategy. This is also seen by Devon colleagues as part of the overall

policy initiative to 'widen participation' in further education by drawing in groups of people who may not have seen learning as being 'for them'. The initiative stems from *Learning Works* (FEFC, 1997), the report of the committee chaired by Helena Kennedy QC. It argues for investing in education for adults who have been missing out on educational opportunities. Caring Options for Training and Work has an active interest in reaching marginalised groups of carers. Isolation and lack of educational provision are especially felt by carers in rural areas. Not everyone wants to leave home to learn, and the project is hoping to develop home-based computer learning as an option. It is also working with Exeter University to develop oral history training for carers' support workers, with a view to offering reminiscence work for older carers. It is undertaking work as well on a housing estate in Barnstaple to look at education issues for carers, as class can be an important factor in accessing learning.

Working with Surrey Training and Enterprise Council

ACE has strong working relationships with Surrey Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). Training for carers has been run by the TEC in partnership with ACE, using pre-vocational funding from the New Deal programme. The usual target is for people to be in work within three months of completing the training. All carers who have gone through the New Deal route have progressed to further training. However, ACE feels that carers need more time to develop self-esteem. ACE's main concern is that carers can be supported to 'open up opportunities at their own pace'. Some carers have progressed to do a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 2 in IT. An NVQ 2 course for carers in teleworking is also planned, for which ACE will fund respite care costs.

In 1999, Surrey TEC funded awards for Adult Learners' Week for carers in the county. The awards were for £200, of which £150 was an Individual Learning Account (ILA).

The TEC holds funding for developing after-school clubs and holiday play schemes. ACE has been working with the TEC to

audit existing schemes for access for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, so that plans can be made to improve access. The TEC is responsible for developing Lifelong Learning partnerships and the New Deal. The TEC, in collaboration with ACE, has ensured that the needs of carers are addressed in both of these initiatives.

Diane's story

'I found out about ACE through Carers' Support, a local carers' support scheme. I wanted to meet other carers for their support and build my confidence with a view to going back to work. I had been out of full-time employment for nine years. My oldest son has a social and communications disorder and caring for him is a full-time occupation. I had lost all my confidence and my skills were now very out of date.

'I gained support from other carers. I also found that I had more skills than I had thought and I started to gain my confidence again. Towards the end of the Club I found that I had gained sufficient confidence to start to find employment.'

Diane found a part-time office job which fitted in with the school runs and was flexible. She updated her computer skills with an adult education course, with guidance on choosing the right course from an ACE worker. Diane says: 'Prior to starting work I was unable to think about courses due to the cost involved with only one income and the length of time of courses. I did not particularly wish to take exams. It was also a daunting prospect to join a class with no confidence and no recent knowledge of a computer. Since the IT course I find that I have more confidence to use my computer skills now that they are updated... I wish to carry on learning about new technology and try to help other carers who might be in the same situation as I was a year ago. I hope my experience might help others.' Diane says that colleges and adult education centres should offer:

- guidance and support for carers
- courses for carers wishing to return to work after a break
- discounted rates for carers to learn.

A pilot scheme in Manchester

Centrica plc and Carers National Association are running a pilot project in Manchester, which has received funding under the New Deal programme. Full-time placements are being offered to disabled people and carers in call centres or data processing centres in Centrica-owned businesses such as British Gas Trading. The scheme aims to provide a clear route to work and to enable people to gain new skills for employment.

Key points for practice

The recognition that carers can and do want to return to employment after a period of caring is central to the work of all these projects. European funding and international partnerships have underpinned the work in Surrey and Devon. An understanding of carers' needs has influenced the development of flexible and individualised provision. Key partnerships have been developed: for example, Surrey TEC has played an important role in the ACE project. The ACE and Caring Options projects will be evaluated by Carers National Association in collaboration with Plymouth University. Meanwhile, the Centrica and CNA link in Manchester shows a business and a voluntary organisation working as partners.

Summary

The majority of carers (70%) are of working age and 49% of carers surveyed had to give up their jobs in order to take on their caring responsibilities. Access to training and employment is a key issue for those carers who want to return to work. Carers want to regain confidence and to update their skills. A recent survey by ACE and Surrey TEC found that 33% of carers lacked the confidence to go into training for work. Carers' organisations working in partnerships with

relevant organisations such as colleges and Training and Enterprise Councils have a pivotal role to play in supporting and developing work-related training for carers. Time and flexibility are both needed for carers to regain confidence gradually in their skills. Carer awareness for employers and other services is vital, so that the needs of carers are recognised.

Making it happen – a checklist of key questions

- What scope is there for planning developments for carers to access training and employment opportunities in your area?
- Who would need to be involved to secure developments?
- How can a programme of carer awareness be carried out for relevant local services?
- How can carers access programmes such as New Deal?

Resources

The training packs produced by ACE and Caring Options will be available from:

Carers National Association
20-25 Glasshouse Yard
London EC1A 4JT
020 7490 8818

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A framework for change: developing learning opportunities for carers

What needs to change for carers to have better access to learning opportunities? There is scope for a great deal of development work, both nationally and at a local level. Carers need to have their specific needs addressed and flexible provision offered, to include built-in respite care and low fees. Partnership working between voluntary and statutory organisations has been the theme of all of the provision described in this book and offers a clear way ahead. Collaborations involving carers' groups, continuing education and health and social services will be needed at a local level to embed learning opportunities for carers. Joint planning and funding of schemes across agencies will be the way to achieve change. The training and employment aspect of learning for carers who want to return to work is an important part of the jigsaw, which is as yet underdeveloped.

There will also be windows of opportunity to make the case for developments within the following initiatives as they develop:

- funding streams emerging from the *Caring about Carers* Government report which may be relevant, such as money for respite care
- advocating the needs of carers to the emerging Learning and Skills Councils in England and their counterparts in the rest of the UK

- recognising carers as an under-represented group in the widening participation initiative, as the Further Education Funding Council in England has recently done
- drawing on relevant parts of the Carers and Disabled Children Bill as the legislation takes shape.

This self-assessment checklist of themes, questions and ideas will help to plan provision across agencies. It could be used to develop an action plan, with dates and targets added. Tick one box for each item, depending on whether each aspect of provision is:

1 Non-existent
2 Under-developed
3 Developed
4 Well-developed

1 2 3 4

Awareness of key reports

☐☐☐☐ Are you and other staff in your organisation aware of the key messages from the strategy paper *Caring for Carers*?

Strategic planning

☐☐☐☐ Are there alliances between key organisations at a local level?

☐☐☐☐ Is there strategic joint planning in place between relevant agencies?

☐☐☐☐ Are the educational needs of carers included in policy documents and action planning?

☐☐☐☐ Are carers' needs addressed in documents such as Lifelong Learning Partnerships and Community Care Plans?

☐☐☐☐ Is the local Learning and Skills Council (due to be set up in 2001 in England) aware of the learning requirements of carers?

1 2 3 4

Senior management support

☐☐☐☐ Do you have the support of senior managers?

☐☐☐☐ If not, is there scope for awareness-raising?

Mapping and needs analysis

☐☐☐☐ Do you know or can you find out how many carers there are in your local area?

☐☐☐☐ Could a local survey of carers be conducted to establish what learning needs there are, what barriers exist and how they can best be addressed?

Consultation and involvement

☐☐☐☐ How can you consult and work alongside local carers' groups and organisations to develop learning opportunities?

☐☐☐☐ How can carers be supported to take an active role in planning, monitoring and evaluating provision aimed at carers?

Building allies and partnerships

☐☐☐☐ Can you consult relevant organisations to see who might be interested in working in partnership to develop access to learning for carers?

Community and media awareness and publicity

☐☐☐☐ Are carers involved in delivering training about their needs across different agencies?

☐☐☐☐ Could a leaflet be produced which targets carers about access to learning?

☐☐☐☐ Could a local or regional conference on access to learning for carers be mounted?

1 2 3 4

☐☐☐☐ Can local celebrations of carers' learning be held, for example during Adult Learners' Week?

☐☐☐☐ Are local newspapers, radio and television given details of success stories of carers' learning?

Practical support

Can agencies work together to plan practical support, such as help with:

☐☐☐☐ transport

☐☐☐☐ respite care

☐☐☐☐ course fees?

Funding

☐☐☐☐ Can pooling funding across agencies support developments in access to learning for carers?

☐☐☐☐ Can a joint funded post be developed to support education for carers?

☐☐☐☐ Can money for widening participation in continuing education be applied for to open up access for carers?

☐☐☐☐ Can project funding be applied for?

☐☐☐☐ Are any current national bursary schemes for carers highlighted and publicised?

Education guidance

☐☐☐☐ Can carers access educational guidance and taster courses to help them make informed choices about their learning?

Curriculum

Can carers be supported to access a wide variety of learning opportunities, such as:

1 2 3 4

☐☐☐☐ skills related to caring, where appropriate, such as safe lifting or stress management?
☐☐☐☐ courses which promote relaxation, such as yoga or aromatherapy?
☐☐☐☐ personal development?
☐☐☐☐ vocational courses?
☐☐☐☐ academic courses?
☐☐☐☐ basic skills?
☐☐☐☐ English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)?
☐☐☐☐ confidence building and assertiveness?

Carers from ethnic minorities

☐☐☐☐ Is first language support available as required for carers from ethnic minorities?
☐☐☐☐ Is English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) tuition available if needed for those carers whose first language is not English?
☐☐☐☐ Is the curriculum offer responsive to the cultural needs of carers from ethnic minorities?

Evaluation

☐☐☐☐ Are carers involved in the evaluation of learning opportunities?

Progression

☐☐☐☐ Are progression opportunities provided for carers in relation to education, training and employment?

Appendix

1998 NATIONAL LOTTERY CHARITIES BOARD CARERS' AWARDS WINNERS

Winners' Profiles

Anglia Region

Mildred Thornton
Age: 42

Mildred would like study English and is interested in learning more about parenting skills and possibilities for her daughter's future. As the sole carer for her teenage daughter Adele who has learning difficulties, Mildred would need respite care for her daughter to make it possible for her to study.

She recognises her daughter Adele's potential 'to learn and become quite independent' and would welcome the chance to develop her own potential and 'boost my self-esteem and feel good about myself.'

Central Region

Janet Bambrough
Age: 38

Janet was unable to continue her computer studies due to her caring commitments. She works on the family farm where she lives with her husband, her two young sons and her sister Gillian who has physical and learning difficulties. Janet's husband also works as a postal worker, which means that he is not always available to take over when she needs to go out to do other things.

Travel to college is time-consuming and expensive for Janet but she 'would relish the chance to obtain some qualifications which would allow me to establish a new career of business working from home'. She feels that learning a new skill would give her a chance to go out and meet people and improve her confidence which would 'have many benefits for the family as a whole for the future'.

Granada Region

Patricia Allouis
Age: 66

Patricia would like to have the opportunity to learn 'to help be identified as a person who "can", and not just "that woman with the handicapped son"'.

As a single parent, looking after her son Jehan, who has profound and multiple learning difficulties, can be very demanding. To be able to learn a new skill, or improve an old skill 'fills a large gap in one's life style, when social life has become limited or non-existent'.

Patricia has a wide range of interests including yoga, languages and batik. A previous Local History course led to schoolchildren visiting her cottage for Living History days, where they used the well, range, mangle and fed the hens. More

opportunities to learn, as her nominator commented, 'would enable her to have stimulation from other adults, meet with peers as an equal, contribute to society within her own right, not just as a parent of a disabled adult.'

HTV West

Christine Cox
Age: 40

'I am really enjoying learning again and feel that I am actually achieving and doing something worthwhile with my life.'

Currently a student on an Informatics course, Christine is hoping to gain a place eventually at university to do a health/business course. Her caring commitments for her two daughters, one of whom has physical disabilities and learning difficulties, means that she cannot always get to college to use the facilities for her assignments.

As a single parent on a limited income the costs of books, computer software and equipment can be difficult or impossible to meet. Her goal is to get full-time employment to support herself and her daughters. She would like to work in the health sector to help other families who care for a person with disabilities.

Carlton Region

Leitha (Babs) Tingle
Age: 51

Babs is a cheerful and energetic person who doesn't ask for favours. As sole carer for her daughter Pat, a young woman with learning difficulties, she organises her life around Pat's support needs and enables Pat to develop skills in her area of interest which are music and childcare.

Having already completed a course in counselling skills Babs would like to obtain the diploma in counselling so she can

work in the community as a counsellor. 'I would particularly like to use my counselling skills in working with adults with learning difficulties and their carers.'

Babs feels that the diploma in counselling would not only provide her with a professional qualification but also a life skill. ' I think no learning experience is ever wasted.'

Meridian Region

Marie Howlett
Age: 49

Marie wants to join an Information Technology course to learn how to use computers, an area in which she has no previous experience.

She cares for her daughter Suzy, who has profound and complex needs and who lives at home with the rest of the family. Suzy lacks confidence in using her own computer which has been lent to her from college, and Marie would like to be able to help her.

As well as learning a new skill, having the opportunity to learn would give Marie '...an interest outside the house so my mind would be fresher and more alert when I am at home'. She and her learning-disabled daughter would be able to use their newly-acquired skills to help each other and would be able to communicate more effectively with the outside world.

Tyne Tees Region

Pauline B Wrench
Age: 48

Pauline teaches students with physical and learning difficulties. She is also the main carer for her son who has disabilities and lives at home with Pauline, her husband and her two other children.

Pauline is particularly interested in learning about health and communication issues in relation to her work, and her role as a carer. Through her study she hopes to gain more knowledge and experience which would help her in the classroom and help her '...carry on with confidence caring for my own son'.

West Country Region

Dot Jeffkins
Age:46

Dot is a cheerful, energetic and enthusiastic volunteer at South Devon College supporting students with disabilities. She has three daughters, the youngest of whom has learning difficulties. Her caring responsibilities mean she has little time to devote to her own needs and career prospects.

She enjoys her work at the college and would value the opportunity to study courses on holistic therapies such as reflexology and aromatherapy. Dot would like to use her learning to give her more experience in the field she works in, and to help her daughter now and in the future.

Yorkshire Region

Jennifer Stamford
Age: 45

Jennifer works as a part-time youth worker and after a 15-year career break would like the chance to extend her skills in counselling to enable her provide a professional level of support for young people. She is keen to do a Graduate Diploma in Counselling course.

Jennifer's 18-year-old autistic son Edward is 'beginning to "take off" to pursue his own interests with support from others and myself'. It is now the right time for Jennifer to begin to

address some of her needs, by taking on a major training commitment as well as continuing to support her son.

Jennifer feels that she would gain great satisfaction from such a challenging course which would, on successful completion, lead to a nationally-recognised qualification.

Grampian Region

Norma Horne
Age: 58

John Horne
Age: 64

John and Norma Horne care for two of their three children who have physical disabilities and learning difficulties. They both work in a voluntary capacity and have been active in setting up sitting services for carers and clubs for children with disabilities.

To help in her voluntary work and potential future employment, Norma would like to develop her knowledge of computers and learn word processing.

John has always been interested in cooking and would like to have the opportunity to improve his cooking and nutritional skills.

They would both like to learn new skills and have the opportunity to meet others who have similar interests.

Norma and John Horne would like to share their Carer's Award between them.

Scottish TV Region

Pauline Wilcox
Age: 30

Pauline would like the chance to study knowing that Jessica, her 15-month-old daughter who has cerebral palsy, is receiving the support she needs.

Pauline is described as a young woman with a strong, vibrant, caring personality. She is constantly exploring new developments which could benefit her daughter and, with this in mind, would like to study aromatherapy. Pauline hopes that the course may also allow her to explore future employment possibilities.

Ulster Region

Laura Collins
Age: 41

Laura has wide and varied experience as a volunteer in the disability sector. She is a highly motivated and caring person. Through her voluntary work she has shared with many others the knowledge and skills she has gained through her personal experience of being a carer. She would like to complement this experience with relevant academic study.

Laura has spent the past 16 years at home caring for her autistic son. She would like to study for a part-time degree in Sociology/Social Policy with a view to re-entering the workforce.

Through her studies, Laura wants to gain an insight into policy-making in the areas of health and social services. She hopes that her course would give her underpinning knowledge for much of her voluntary work and be a route for personal development and achievement of her potential.

1999 NATIONAL LOTTERY CHARITIES BOARD CARERS' AWARDS WINNERS

Winners' profiles

Anglia Region

Mary Gill
Age: 69

Mary Gill would like the opportunity to study Information Technology.

A long-time and very active member of her local MENCAP society, Mary is also a governor of the local special school and a member of the Children's Society. Computer skills would, she feels, help her with these various responsibilities and give her 'more confidence because I was learning again and the great feeling that I was in touch with today and had skills for 2000.'

Mary would also like to be able to teach her 23-year-old son James, who has Down's Syndrome, computer skills to '...give him communication skills and more self-confidence'.

Border Region

Sally Percival
Age: 35

Sally Percival is '...very keen to return to learning to improve my chances of securing employment, to give myself another interest and the chance to enjoy myself'.

Sally is a single parent with two children. Her son Alexander is autistic.

Through her involvement with various voluntary organisations, Sally comes into contact with people who are in a similar

situation to hers. She uses her experience to support other families.

Sally would like to do a counselling course which she feels would help her in her role of supporting other families. The course would '...improve my CV and give me a better insight into how best to relate with people whom I come into contact with'.

Central Region

Gurmit K Jandu
Age: 42

Gurmit is widowed and looks after her 16-year-old son who has learning difficulties. Her son goes to college, '...loves animals ...loves music and talking to his friends'. She encourages him '...to do as much as possible by himself'.

Gurmit works as a volunteer at her local carers' centre. She would like to develop her written and spoken English with a view to gaining employment, perhaps working with people with learning difficulties.

The opportunity to return to learning would help Gurmit '...gain further knowledge...to be able to deal much better with information that I gain'.

Granada Region

Deborah Eden
Age: 34

Deborah has three children, whom she would like to be able to '...help better' in their on-going education. Deborah helps at the school where one of her children attends and her support is very much valued by the school staff.

Deborah's eldest son Peter has learning difficulties, partial cerebral palsy and also suffers from epilepsy, as does her second

son Christopher. Her youngest child Ceri is due to undergo tests for epilepsy.

Due to illness when young, Deborah missed a lot of schooling and she would now like the opportunity to develop her general reading, writing and other basic skills. She is interested in doing courses in literacy and assertiveness. Through returning to learning Deborah hopes that her '...confidence would improve and I would not have to rely on other people explaining things to me.'

HTV-West Region

Derek Coles
Age: 66

Derek is described by his nominator as '...a natural 'lifelong learner' who is a carer who wants to do something new and interesting regardless of age or infirmity.'

Despite serious health problems of his own, he combines caring for his son Graeme with pursuing his interests as an amateur historian. Since retirement, Derek has been Graeme's primary carer, allowing his wife Brenda to develop her artistic interests.

Derek's son Graeme is 34 and although unable to speak, '...his eyes speak in many ways. He is independent, loves to laugh and has a cheeky grin.' He enjoys a glass of wine with his food, 'watching TV and watching activity around him'. Graeme has cerebral palsy, epilepsy and uses a wheelchair.

Derek would like to attend a course on local history as for many years he has wanted to research the area in London where he was born. Derek recently visited the place where he was born and he found that his street had been '...cleared and replaced with flats... I would like to know what the original open fields were used for and when they were swallowed up by the growth of the suburban terraced streets. I would then like to be able to write the history, for my own pleasure and satisfaction and hopefully for the interest of the wider public.'

HTV-Wales Region

Irene Elsaesser
Age: 53

'I would like to gain more confidence and knowledge in handling and training horses; especially horses that are having problems in different areas.'

Busy mother of nine, Irene would like to train towards the Horse Whisperer 'Monty Roberts Preliminary Certificate of Horsemanship'. Having moved to the countryside, Irene has renewed a lifelong interest in horses. She volunteers each week with a local Riding for Disabled group.

Irene wants to work with children with learning difficulties and provide horse riding and animal care. 'I have suffered in the past with my personal identity. I believe learning would not only equip me to work with horses and people but would help me through these old stumbling blocks and move on in life.'

Irene's youngest child, seven-year-old Alissa, has Down's Syndrome. 'She enjoys life and loves learning... She is keen to help with our ponies and learn more about them.'

LWT/Carlton Region

Tola Ogidan
Age: 33

On top of her responsibilities as a full-time carer, Tola Ogidan is involved in two local groups for ethnic minority carers. Tola has two children. Her four-year-old son, who is her eldest child, has cerebral palsy.

Tola would like to study on a programme in counselling skills. 'It would be really useful for me to get back to learning in order to increase the skills needed to support families and carers of children with disabilities. Also this might help me with future employment opportunities.'

She has many concerns about the wider experiences of car-

ers and is interested in using her skills and training to support and counsel other carers, especially those from ethnic minority communities. 'I want to reach out and support carers, give them someone who will listen and empathise with them.'

Meridian Region

Lorraine Hunt
Age: 43

Lorraine would like to return to learning for 'the pleasure of learning' and 'the knowledge of learning the right way to do things'.

As yet undecided about what she wants to learn, Lorraine would like to get out of the home and spend time on herself on a regular basis. Learning would widen her horizons and refresh her mind.

Lorraine is herself registered disabled and looks after her father who is ill with terminal cancer and her step-sister and brother Ricky and Pat, both of whom have '...special needs with minimal speech...Ricky is a joy to look after so is Pat'

Tyne Tees Region

Angela Haywood
Age: 57

Although singing and playing violin for a number of years, Angela has lacked the time and money to improve her skills and this has proved rather frustrating for her. The opportunity to return to learning would give Angela the chance for 'personal development of any singing or violin-playing ability which I may yet have. I have been (attempting) to play the violin for 37 years!'

Angela's adopted son Liam has Down's Syndrome, he is a '...gorgeous kind and loving person'. Liam is greatly interested

in music and would gain a lot from his mother's increased involvement in music. 'He needs me to have some independent interests, so that he can be the independent personality he is trying to be.'

Angela's husband runs the local Folk Club and once she has gained more confidence in her musical skills she would like to be able to back him up musically.

West Country Region

Janet Helmore
Age: 45

Janet's nominator describes her as an enthusiastic, friendly and lively personality who has been active at the school which both her sons attended. Since her eldest son started college, she has helped out there with fundraising and transporting students to social events. Janet also has experience of working as a teachers' support assistant for children with profound learning difficulties and working with students who have behavioural problems. She now devotes her time to her two sons who both have Fragile X Syndrome and learning difficulties.

Janet has plans to set up a support group for parents of children with Fragile X Syndrome. If she could access information on the Internet and pass it onto others, it may be possible to develop a support group/system via computers/the Internet.

'I would like to take a computer course...to increase my basic computer knowledge...to aid me in passing that knowledge on to the boys...also if we are able to set up a local self-help group, a knowledge of desk top publishing would help me producing newsletters.'

Yorkshire Region

Eileen Saddique
Age: 56

Eileen is a single mum who cares for her daughter who has moderate learning difficulties. Since 1995 her daughter has been extremely ill and although she still needs ongoing 24-hour care, she is now slowly making a recovery '...in which her old self is re-emerging – her zest for life, sense of humour and the plans she has for the future'.

Her nominator says, 'Mrs Saddique is a fighter in the best sense of the word but she is also a sensitive and caring individual.'

Eileen would like to do a one-year counselling course. She would '...expect to learn more about myself; it would help me to be more confident with people and be an opportunity to mix socially with other adults'.

Grampian Region

Stephen Carter
Age: 47

Stephen lives in a very remote area of the Highlands where he is a carer for his 16-year-old daughter. His daughter requires 24-hour care and cannot attend school due to her delicate health.

Living in a remote area, Stephen Carter is very isolated and has no access to a college. He would have to study from home. Stephen would like to study for an MA in Humanities and an MA in Distance Learning. He hopes to teach Humanities, through distance learning in the future.

In his own words returning to learning would give 'in the short-term a great deal of mental satisfaction and in the long-term to be able to give my daughter the care she needs and also work from home since I have not been able to go out to work for the last 12 years'.

Scottish TV Region

Jan Francis
Age: 41

For Jan '...the chance to pick up learning again would be a dream come true'.

A single parent, Jan is a busy mother of her ten-year-old twin boys Michael and Bryan, who are both autistic. She gets little opportunity to socialise due to her limited finances and her commitment to her sons.

Jan would like to do some type of beauty therapy course as this would be a chance for her to do something for herself and '...gain confidence in competing in the job market and possibly improve my financial situation for myself and my sons'.

Ulster Region

Katie McCallan
Age: 45

Katie would like to have the opportunity to return to learning to study Information Technology. She hopes that the learning experience will help her update her skills, which would be helpful when and if she was in a position to return to employment.

Katie looks after her 21-year-old son who has both learning and physical disabilities.

'Hopefully the learning experience will help me to focus on issues other than those of my role as a carer, meet other people from different backgrounds, also restore my confidence and sense of 'self-worth.'

Useful addresses

Carers National Association
20-25 Glasshouse Yard
London EC1A 4JT
Tel: 020 7490 8818
www.carersuk.demon.co.uk or www.carersnorth.demon.co.uk

Crossroads: Caring for Carers
10 Regent Place
Rugby CV21 2PN
Tel: 01788 573653
Crossroads has 214 home-based respite care schemes across England and Wales

NIACE
21 De Montfort Street
Leicester LE1 7GE
Tel: 0116 204 4200/1
www.niace.org.uk

Mencap
National Centre
123 Golden Lane
London EC1Y 0RT
Tel: 020 7454 0454
www.mencap.org.uk

Princess Royal Trust for Carers
142 Minories
London EC3N 1LS
Tel: 020 7480 7788
www.carers.org

National Extension College
18 Brooklands Avenue
Cambridge CB2 2HN
Tel: 01223 450200
www.nec.ac.uk

Skill
National Bureau for Students with Disabilities
Chapter House
18-20 Crucifix Lane
London SE1 3JW
Tel: 020 7450 0620
Information service: 0800 328 5050
www.skill.org.uk

ACCESS AND INCLUSION

'I want to learn so I will be identified as a person who "can" and not just "that woman with the handicapped son".'

Patricia Allouis, Carers' Award Winner

One in eight people is a family carer of a disabled or ill relative. Learning can provide the chance for family carers to gain new skills, and can give a much-needed break from caring. However, learning opportunities for carers are under-developed nationally. How can different combinations of staff from continuing education, social services, health, carers' organisations and voluntary organisations work together to plan for change?

This practical book offers case studies of good practice in the few organisations which have developed learning for carers by working across agencies. Collaboration is the key to developments. *Access and Inclusion* gives the perspective of carers who have been able to embark on learning, in their own words. It draws on the powerful voices of NIACE Carers' Awards winners, who won small grants to pursue their learning interests. Questions to reflect on are given at the end of each chapter, plus a detailed checklist to plan developments. This book will be of practical help to staff across agencies who are interested in developing learning for carers.

Cover picture: Lancashire Adult Education Carers Project – detail of glass window made during a carers re-charge course at Lancashire College.

NIACE, the national organisation for adult learning, has a broad remit to promote lifelong learning opportunities for adults. NIACE works to develop increased participation in education and training. It aims to do this for those who do not have easy access because of barriers of class, gender, age, race, language and culture, learning difficulties or disabilities, or insufficient financial resources.

Registered charity number: 1002775

The NIACE website on the Internet is http://www.niace.org.uk

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